

**A STUDY ON THE VALUES, INTERESTS, SKILLS, AND
CAREER INDECISION AMONG STUDENTS AT THE
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

TEO AIK CHUAN

**UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2009**

**A STUDY ON THE VALUES, INTERESTS, SKILLS, AND
CAREER INDECISION AMONG STUDENTS AT THE
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

A Thesis Submitted to the College of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
In Fulfillment of the Requirement for Master of Business Administration

by

Teo Aik Chuan

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting the thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree from Universiti Utara Malaysia, I agree that the University Library may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, scholarly purpose may be granted by my supervisor or in their absence, by the Dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to Universiti Utara Malaysia for any scholarly use which may be made of any material from my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this thesis, in whole or in part, should be addressed to:

Assistants Vice Chancellor
College of Business
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman

ABSTRACT

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara nilai, minat, kemahiran dan keraguan karier di kalangan mahasiswa tahun akhir di Kolej Perniagaan, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Data dalam kajian ini dikumpul daripada 318 pelajar dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan korelasi *Pearson* analisis. Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan hubungan negatif di antara nilai, minat, kemahiran, dan keraguan karier.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between values, interests, skills, and career indecision among final year students at the College of Business (COB), Universiti Utara Malaysia. The data for the study was collected from 318 students and analyzed by using the Pearson Correlations analyses. The results of the study indicate negative relationships between values, interests, skills, and career indecision.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study would not be possible without acknowledging all the people who assisted along the study. First and foremost, I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Mohd Khairuddin bin Hashim , who consistently contributed his time, ideas and words of encouragement during the preparation of this study.

My special thanks to all my friends especially Ms. Cheah Ching Mun, Ms. Jolyne Khor, and Ms. Wong Ha Ding for their kind advices and support. In addition, I am also grateful to all my respondents who spent their precious time in completing the questionnaire. Last but not least, my family who provided the firm support and encouragement that allowed me to complete this task.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT (BAHASA MELAYU).....	ii
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	1
1.3 Research Problem.....	3
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Research Objectives.....	5
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.7 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.8 Definition of Terms	7
1.9 Organization of the Thesis.....	7
 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Career Theories and Concepts.....	9
2.2.1 Trait and Factor Theory.....	10
2.2.2 Holland's Career Typology Theory.....	11
2.2.3 Super's Theory.....	13
2.2.4 The Passion Puzzle.....	14
2.3 Defining Career Indecision.....	15
2.4 Literature and Previous Studies on Values, Interests, and Skills... ..	19
2.4.1 Values.....	21
2.4.2 Interests.....	23
2.4.3 Skills.....	25
2.5 Summary.....	27
 3 METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Research Framework.....	29
3.3 Research Hypotheses.....	30
3.4 Sampling Frame and Sample.....	31
3.5 Data Collection Method.....	32
3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis.....	32
3.7 Questionnaires.....	32
3.8 Pilot Test.....	34

3.9 Reliability.....	34
3.10 Summary.....	35
4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
4.1 Introduction.....	36
4.2 Characteristics of the Respondents.....	36
4.3 Values.....	37
4.4 Interests.....	38
4.5 Skills.....	39
4.6 Career Indecision.....	39
4.7 Hypotheses Testing.....	40
4.7.1 Relationship between Values and Career Indecision.....	40
4.7.2 Relationship between Interests and Career Indecision.....	41
4.7.3 Relationship between Skills and Career Indecision.....	42
4.8 Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing.....	43
4.9 Summary.....	44
5 CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATION	
5.1 Introduction.....	45
5.2 Discussion of Research Results.....	45
5.2.1 Relationship between Values and Career Indecision.....	46
5.2.2 Relationship between Interests and Career Indecision.....	46
5.2.3 Relationship between Skills and Career Indecision.....	47
5.2.4 Other Comments from the Respondents.....	47
5.3 Limitations of the Study.....	48
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research.....	49
5.5 Conclusion.....	50

List of Tables

	Page
2.1 Holland's Career Typology.....	12
3.1 Target Population and Sample.....	31
3.2 Coefficient Alpha Scores	35
4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents.....	37
4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Values	38
4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Interests	38
4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Skills	39
4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Career Indecision.....	40
4.6 Correlation between Dimensions of Values and Career Indecision.....	40
4.7 Correlation between Values and Career Indecision.....	41
4.8 Correlation between Dimensions of Interests and Career Indecision.....	41
4.9 Correlation between Interests and Career Indecision.....	42
4.10 Correlation between Dimensions of Skills and Career Indecision.....	42
4.11 Correlation between Skills and Career Indecision.....	43
4.12 Summary of Hypotheses	43

List of Figures

	Page
3.1 Research Framework of the Study.....	30

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter explains the focus of the study. More specifically, the chapter presents the background of study, its research problem, research questions, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study and its scope.

1.2 Background of the Study

In Malaysia, students completing secondary schools, generally look forward to attend university, get their scrolls and seek a satisfying career (Talib and Tan, 2009). However, the transition from university to a workplace is always complicated. For instance, graduate unemployment was the common issue of all. Although some students may have clear career planning in their minds, but, some students may require more time in exploring their career.

According to Career Carnival and Entrepreneurship by Ministry of Higher Education 2009 indicates that 48 percent of Malaysian graduates remained unemployed six months after convocation (Ideris, 2009). Does this scenario occur due to unavailable job openings? Jobstreet Survey (2005) validates that about 85 percent of local and foreign companies have positions for fresh graduates. In line with the findings, Jobstreet.com and Jen International Executive Search indicated

The contents of
the thesis is for
internal user
only

REFERENCES

- Australian National Training Authority (2003a). Shaping Our Future: Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training. Retrieved 1 May 2008, from http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/98206EC7-3B9A-4A58-991F-4F28010BF825/16445/national_strategy.pdf
- Australian National Training Authority (2003b). Annual National Report of the Australian Vocational Education and Training System. Retrieved 1 May 2008, from <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/912734A5-2AD6-4156-A7FA-79C98DB6184A/10791/ANRVol3.pdf>
- ASVAB Career Exploration Program (2009). Retrieved July 7, 2009, from <http://www.asvabprogram.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=learn.workvalues>
- Baker, H.E. (2002). Reducing Adolescent Career Indecision: The ASVAB Career Exploration Program. *Career Development Quarterly*.
- Betz, N.E. & Luzzo, D.A. (1996). Career Assessment and the Career Decision-Making. Self-Efficacy Scale. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 4 , pp. 413–428.
- Blotnick, S. (1980). Retrieved 3 March 2009, from http://www.zoominfo.com/people/Blotnick_Srully_635712820.aspx
- Boer, P. (2009). Work Values Checklist. Retrieved June 16, 2009, from <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/Career-Assessment/Work-Values-Check-List/article.aspx>
- Brown, D. & Crace, R.K. (1996). Values in Life Role Choices and Outcomes: A Conceptual Model. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 44, pp. 211–223.
- Bunckingham, M., & Clifton, O.L. (2005). *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Callahan, G.A., & Greenhaus, J.H. (1992) . The Career Indecision of Managers and Professionals: An examination of Multiple Subtypes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 41 , pp. 212-231.
- Card. O.S. (2008). Sorting Out the Right and Wrong of Ambition. Retrieved September 10, 2009, from <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695244642/Orson-Scott-Card-Sorting-out-the-right-and-wrong-of-ambition.html>

Chartrand, J.M., Martin, W.F., Robbins, S.B., McAuliffe, G.J., Pickering, & J.W., Calliotte, J.A. (1994). Testing a Level Versus an Interactional View of Career Indecision. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 2, pp. 55–69.

Crites, J.O. (1969). *Vocational Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Curtis, D. & McKenzie, P. (2001). Employability Skills for Australian Industry: Literature Review and Framework Development. In Australian Council for Educational Research & Australia Dept of Education Science and Training (Eds.). Canberra: Dept of Education, Science and Training, 2001. Dept of Education, Science and Training.

Frost, R.O., & Shows, D.L. (1993). The Nature and Measurement of Compulsive Indecisiveness. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 21, pp. 683-692.

Gati, I., & Asher, I. (2001). The PIC Model for Career Decision Making: Prescreening, In-Dept Exploration, and Choice. In F.T. Leong & A. Barak (Eds), *Contemporary models in vocational psychology* (pp. 7-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S.H. (1996). A Taxonomy of Difficulties in Career Decision Making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43, pp. 510–526.

Gati, I. & Saka, N. (2001). Career-Related Decision-Making Difficulties of High-School Students. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 79(3), pp.331-340.

Germeijs, V. & De Boeck, P. (2002). A Measurement Scale for Indecisiveness and its Relationship to Career Indecision and Other Types of Indecision. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 18(2), pp.113-122.

Gaffner, D., & Hazler, R.J. (2002). Factors Related to Indecisiveness and Career Indecision in Undecided College Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 30, pp. 541-545.

Gianakos, I. (1999). Patterns of Career Choice and Career Decision-Making Selfefficacy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54, pp. 244-258.

Guay, F., Senecal, C., Gauthier, L. & Fernet, C. (2003). Predicting Career Indecision: A Self-determination Theory Perspective. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 50(2), pp.165-177.

Guay, F., Ratelle, C.F., Senecal, C., Larose, S., & Deshenes, A. (2006). Distinguishing Developmental From Chronic Career Indecision: Self-efficacy, Autonomy, and Social Support. *Journal of Career Assessment*, pp. 141-17.

- Gupta, S. & Tracey, T.J.G. (2008). Interest Assessment in An international Context. In J.A. Athanasou & R.V. Esbroeck (Eds.), *International Handbook of Career Guidance*. Netherlands: Springer.
- Gordon, L., & Meyer, J.C. (2002). Career Indecision Among Prospective University Students. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 32, 41-47.
- Hagstrom, S.J., Skovholt, T.S., & Rivers, D.A. (1997). The Advanced Undecided College Students: A Qualitative Study. *NACADA Journal*, 172, pp.23-30.
- Hamzah, N.Y., (2005). Labour Woes: Let Market Forces Provide Solution. Retrieved May 12, 2009, from <http://m.malaysiakini.com/letters/35761>
- Hannah, L.K., & Robinson, L.F. (1990). Survey Report: How Colleges Help Freshmen Select Courses and Careers. *Journal of career planning and employment*, 1, pp. 53-57.
- Harun, N.H. (2006). Career Decision Making Difficulties Among Female Final Year BBA Students' At UUM. Retrieved March 3, 2009, from http://eprints.uum.edu.my/1900/1/Nor_Harlinda_Harun_Career_decision_making_difficulties_among_female_final_year_BBA_students'_at_UUM.pdf
- Heiderick & Struggles (2007). *Mapping Global Talent: Essays and Insights*.
- Hii, C. (2007). Need to Resolve Mismatch in the Jobs Market. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from http://clementhii.com/topic.php?t_ID=66
- Herr, E., Cramer, S. & Niles, S. (2004). *Career Guidance and Counselling Through Lifespan: Systematic Approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Hewitt, A. & d'Abadie, L. (2005). *The Power of Focus for College Students*. Florida: Health Communications Inc..
- Holland, J.L. & Holland, J.E. (1977). A Measure of Agreement for Use with The Holland Classification System. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 24, pp. 133-141.
- Holland, J.L. (1985). *Making Vocational Choices* (2nd Eds.) Odessa, FL.: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
- Ideris, A. (2009). Enhancing Graduate Employability: Issues, Concerns and The Way Forward. Retrieved September 3, 2009, from http://www.alumni.upm.edu.my/employability/papers/007_res_closing.pdf
- Jobstreet.com (2005). Survey of Why Managers on Reasons Why They Did Not Hire Some Fresh Graduates. Retrieved September 8, 2008, from http://pesona.mmu.edu.my/~ytbau/tes3211/job_survey_2005.pdf

- Jones, L.K. (2009). Career Indecision. Retrieved July 20, 2009, from http://www.careerkey.org/asp/your_decision/career_indecision.html
- Jackson Vocational Interest Survey. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from <http://www.jvis.com>
- Kelly, K.R., & Pulver, C.A. (2003). Refining Measurement of Career Indecision Types: A validity study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81, pp.445–454.
- Lee, K.H., (2005). Coping with Career Indecision: Differences between Four Career Choice Types. *Journal of Career Development*, 31, 279-289.
- Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D., & Hackett, G. (1996). Career Development from A Social Cognitive Perspectiv. In D. Brown, & L. Brooks (Eds), *Career Choice and Development* (3rd ed., pp.373-422). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lucas, M.S., & Epperson, D.L. (1988). Personality Types in Vocationally Undecided College Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 29, pp. 460-465.
- Mau, W.C. (1995). Decision-Making Styles as a Predictor of Career Decision Status and Treatment Gains. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 3, pp. 90–101.
- MacKay-Lassonde, C. (1996). No One Can Have it All. *Canadian Business Review*, 23, pp. 41–44.
- Mahmood, M.A. (1987). Systems Development Methods: A Comparative Investigation. *MIS Quarterly*, pp.293-303.
- Miller, R.L. (1999). *Your Career Adventure: Exploring and Planning for Tomorrow* (2nd ed.). United States: West Educational Publishing.
- Ministry of Higher Education (2006 & 2010). The National Education System. Retrieved June 10, 2009, from http://www.portal.mohe.gov.my/portal/page/portal/ExtPortal/Agencies/Study_in_Malaysia/National_Education_System
- Morgan, T. & Ness, D. (2003). Career Decision-Making Difficulties of First-Year Students. Retrieved February 27, 2009 from <http://www.contactpoint.ca/cjcd/v2-n1/article4.pdf>
- Mosconi, J. & Emmett (2003). Effects of a Values Clarification Curriculum on High School Students' Definitions of Success. *Professional School Counseling*. 7:2, pp.68-77
- Multon, K.D. & Lapan, R.T. (1995). Developing Scales to Evaluate Career and

Personal Guidance Curricula in a High School Setting. *Journal of Career Development*, 21, pp. 93-305.

National Center on Education and the Economy, (2007). Tough Choices or Tough Times (Executive Summary). Retrieved 10 January 2008, from http://skillscommission.org/pdf/exec_sum/ToughChoices_EXECSUM.pdf

Nevill, D.D., & Super, D.E. (1988). Career Maturity and Commitment to Work in University Students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 32, pp. 139-151.

Nota, L. & Soresi, S. (2003). An assertiveness Training Program for Indecisive Students Attending an Italian University. *Career Development Quarterly*, 51, pp. 32-54.

Novak, G. (2009). The Seven Qualities of a Successful Person. Retrieved September August 10, 2009, from <http://gregseagleblog.blogspot.com/2009/09/part-1-7-qualities-of-successful-person.html>

Osipow, S.H. (1999). Assessing Career Indecision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 55, pp.147–154.

Parsons, F. (1909). Choosing a Vocation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Patton, W. & Creed, P.A. (2001). Developmental Issues in Career Maturity and Career Decision Status. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 49, pp.336-351.

Patton, W., Creed, P. A., & Watson, M. (2003). Perceived Work Related and Non-Work Related Barriers in the Career Development of Australian and South African Adolescents. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 55, pp.74-82.

Pierce, R.A. & Rowell, J.S. (2005). The 10 Keys to Effective Supervision. Retrieved July 23, 2009, from http://www.risingsunconsultants.com/images/white_papers/PDFs/Supervision-Short.pdf

Ranjit, S.M. & Wahab, A.B. (2007). Your Dream Job: How to Get it and Excel.

Ray, H.N. & Oliver, J.E. (1990). Enhancing System Analysis and Design Through Value Training. *Journal of Information Technology Management*, 1(1), pp.29-32.

Reeves, G.W. & Reeves, T.G. (1982). Values Clarification and Career Decision Making. *Counseling and Values*, 24, pp.236–240.

Referatele.com. Ambition: In Order to Live Life Fully You Need an Ambition. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from

<http://www.referatele.com/referate/engleza/online12/Ambition---In-order-to-live-life-fully-you-need-an-ambition-referatele-com.php>

Rohn, J., (1994). The Power of Ambition. Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.nightingale.com/prod_detail~product~Power_Of_Ambition.aspx

Rojewski, J.W. (1994). Career Indecision Types for Rural Adolescents from Disadvantages and Disadvantages Backgrounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41(3), pp.356-363.

Savickas, M.L., & Jarjoura, D. (1991). The Career Decision Scale as a Type Indicator. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 38, pp. 85-90.

Sharf, R.S. (1996). Applying Career Development Theory to Counseling. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Skill Inventory. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from <http://www.smith.edu/cdo/students/handouts/skill-inventory.PDF>

Slaney, R.B. (1988). The Assessment of Career Decision Making. In W.B. Walsh & S.H. Osipow (Eds.), *Career Decision Making* (pp. 33–76). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Staley, W. (1996). The Relationship between Fear of Success, Self-Concept, and Career Decision Making. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Super, D.E. (1954). Career Patterns as a Basis for Vocational Counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1(1), pp.12-19.

Super, D.E., & Thompson, A.S. (1979). A Six-Scale, Two-Factor Measure of Adolescent Career or Vocational Maturity. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 28, pp. 6-15.

Spokane, A.R., Meir, E.I., & Catalano, M. (2000). Person-Environment Congruence and Holland's Theory: A Review and Reconsideration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57, pp.137-187.

Sverko, B., Babarovic, T., and Sverko, I. (2005). Assessment of Values and Role Salience. *International Handbook of Career Guidance* Springer Netherlands pp. 539-564

Sverko, B., Babarovic, T., and Sverko, I. (2008). Assessment of Values and Role Salience. In J.A. Athanasou & R.V. Esbroeck (Eds.), *International Handbook of Career Guidance* (pp.539-564). Netherlands: Springer.

Talib, M.A. & Tan, K.A. (2009). Predictors of Career Indecision Among Malaysian Undergraduates Students. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2), 215-222.

The New Straits Times (Malaysia), June 21, 2008. Career: You're Hired!

Tracey, J.G. & Darcey, M. (2002). An Idiographic Examination of Vocational Interests and Their Relation to Career Decidedness. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 49(4), pp.420-427.

Tyler, L.E. (1969). *The Work of the Counselor* (3rd Eds.). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

UNESCO, (2007). A multi-stakeholder Approach to Address Graduate Unemployment. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001529/152959e.pdf>

Vondracek, F.W., Schulenberg, J.E., Skorikov, B., Gillespie, L.K., & Wahlheim, C. (1995). The Relationship of Identity Status to Career Indecision During Adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, 18, pp.17-29.

Wanberg, C.R. & Muchinsky, P.M. (1992). A Typology of Career Decision Status: Validity Extension of the Vocational Decision Status Model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 27, pp.71-80.

Work Values Exercise. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from <http://workinfontet.bc.ca/docs/WorkValuesExercise.pdf>

Zimmerman, A.L., & Kontosh, L.G.A (2006). *Systems Theory Approach to Career Decision Making*. IOS Press

Zunker, V. G. (2001). *Career Counseling: Applied Concepts of Life Planning*. Sixth Edition. Pacific Grove, CA : Brooks/Cole.